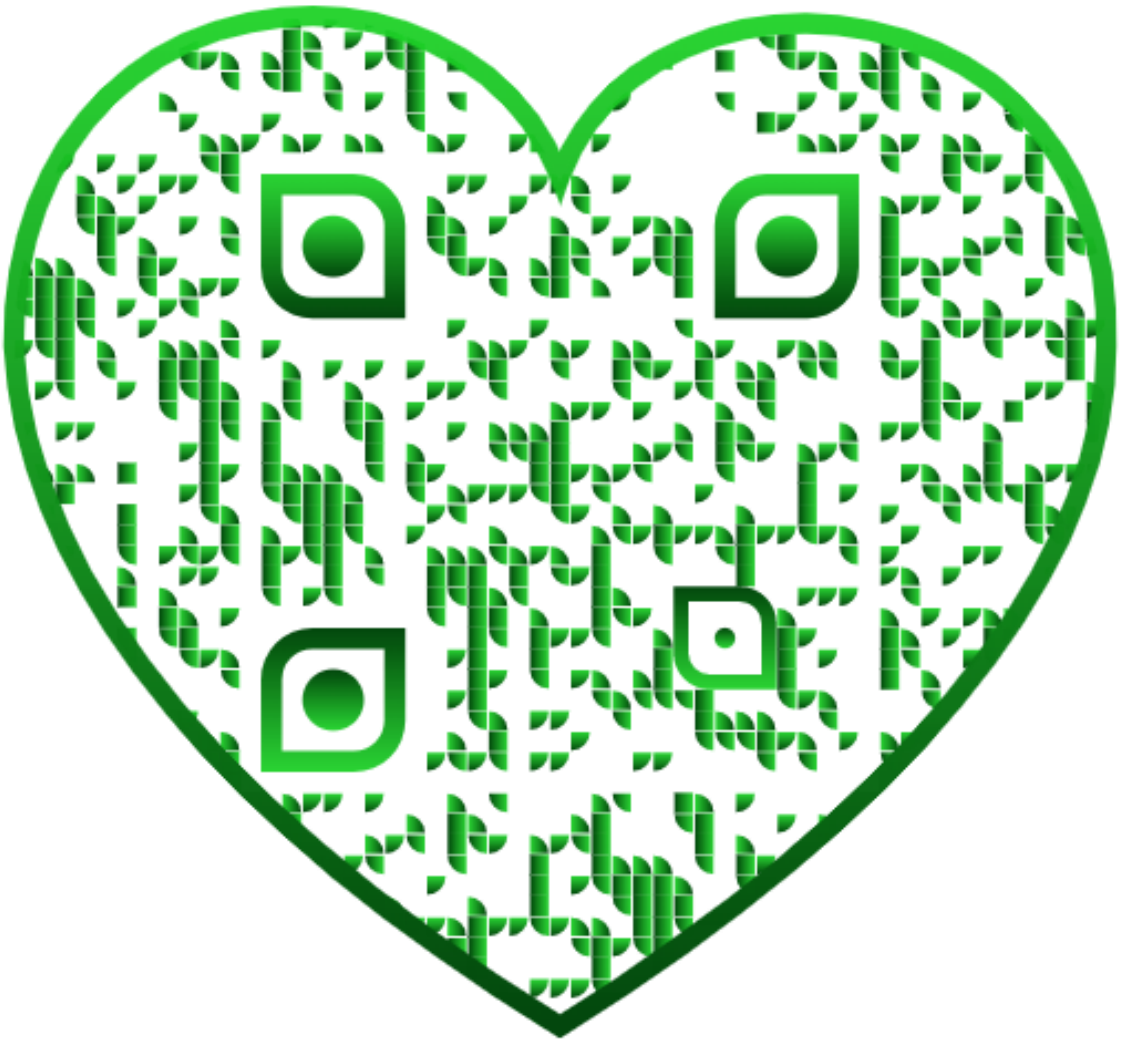
ANCIENT ASTRONAUTS

Discerning Facts from Myths

CONRAD BAUER



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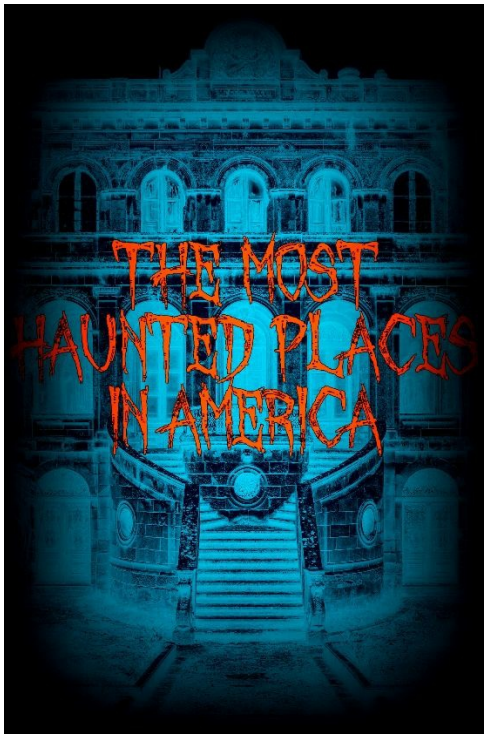

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Is it Possible?

The idea of beings from another world descending to our own to influence human society is as old as society itself. Myths and legends from all over the world abound with such tales, whether it is the sky boats said to have landed in Native American territory or the flaming chariots witnessed by Ezekiel in the Bible. Every corner of the globe seems to have some fire-bearing Prometheus spreading knowledge and enlightenment somewhere in its dark past.

So there has always been a theme of visitation from elsewhere by non-human beings—but it was only in the last century that accounts of these visitations began to develop a decidedly extraterrestrial sheen. No less than the late great astronomer Carl Sagan (although a skeptic on the issue) took credit for kick starting the whole phenomenon. In the late 1970s, when the ancient astronaut theory was at its height thanks to the works of Erich Von Daniken and Zachariah Sitchin, Sagan claimed that it could all be traced back to remarks he had made a decade before.

Back in 1966, Sagan had first suggested that some ancient myths could be attempts to describe ET encounters. He pointed to the Sumerian legend of a fishlike being named Oannes who was said to have descended from the stars to give mankind special knowledge of mathematics as a potential instance of "paleocontact" with extraterrestrials.

Just a few years later, men were landing on the moon in the Apollo missions. For the first time, humanity witnessed a species leaving its own world and setting foot on another, and it seems that this milestone congealed with Sagan's words in the minds of authors such as Erich Von Daniken. Von Daniken's *Chariots of the Gods* helped to promote a new theory that ancient alien astronauts could have touched down on Earth just as Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin touched down on the moon.

Sagan, however, downplayed the very theory he believed he had inspired. He

explained that all he had wanted was for people to consider the possibility, and said that he found it “appalling” that Von Daniken and other authors were so “uncritical” in their thinking. Sagan believed that it was highly irresponsible to take what he perceived to be the most circumstantial of evidence and run with it as if it were absolute proof of ancient alien contact.

It’s undoubtedly true that in a universe of billions of stars and planets, the odds of intelligent aliens just happening to land our world are long indeed. But be that as it may, it’s largely thanks to the work of Von Daniken that the rest of us get to do as Sagan suggested and consider the possibilities.

Ancient Annunaki Astronauts

You can’t begin the discussion of ancient astronauts without mentioning the mind-bending saga of the Annunaki. The tales of these “sky gods” who descended upon humanity in the ancient past come to us from the ancient Sumerians of Mesopotamia. Mesopotamia was nestled between the Tigris and Euphrates, and its name translates as “Land Between the Rivers”. Mesopotamian territory consisted of parts of modern-day Syria, Iraq and Turkey.

Mesopotamia is the world’s oldest known civilization, having come into existence around 5000 BC. It is in Mesopotamia that we find the first evidence of writing, mathematics, and astronomy—and it is the Sumerians’ unrivaled knowledge of the latter that has always provoked the most interest and controversy. For, seven thousand years ago, the Sumerians had an understanding of the heavens that would not be matched again until the 19th century.

Modern research has revealed that the denizens of ancient Mesopotamia

knew the exact locations of the planets and other even smaller celestial objects. No other ancient civilization even came close. Indeed, at a time when most would have assumed that the Earth was flat and that it was the center of the universe, the Sumerians correctly identified the sun as the center of the solar system and deftly pinpointed all of the planets and satellites that orbit around it.

Not only that, they even gave vivid descriptions of color patterns on the surfaces of these far-flung worlds. Locked within the cuneiform tablets of Mesopotamia, detailed descriptions of Uranus and Neptune have been discovered. Although many archeologists have puzzled over the impossible knowledge possessed by the Sumerians, how a people without telescopes could have had such detailed information has never been adequately explained.

But perhaps if we were to ask the Sumerians themselves—or rather, consult the records they left behind on their clay tablets—we could be enlightened. According to the late writer, researcher, and ancient astronaut proponent Zachariah Sitchin, if you sift through the cuneiform data, you can pierce through the entire mystery of the ancient Mesopotamian civilization. And that is exactly what Sitchin did.

Sitchin, who was born in the Central Asian country of Azerbaijan, immigrated to the United States in the early 1950s. Already acquainted with Hebrew and other ancient Semitic languages, he took the time to brush up on his cuneiform while working as a manager for a nondescript shipping company in New York City. He may have been getting a paycheck as a logistics expert, but his true passion was always language, and he soon became a master of ancient Sumerian. After decades of study and research, he compiled his findings in the seminal ancient astronaut tome *The 12th Planet*. In this book Sitchin claims to have uncovered a shocking account of ancient alien intervention into the lives of ordinary human beings.

However, Sitchin’s fascination with the tantalizing possibility of ancient alien contact actually began when he was a child listening to a rabbi read Hebrew scripture. Sitchin was intrigued by the enigmatic verse in the Book of Genesis

that describes angels descending to the Earth and mingling with humanity.

In the Bible, these beings and their offspring are called Nephilim. The Hebrew translation of this word is “those who have been cast down”. From what the Bible tells us (and we will deal with possible biblical accounts of ancient astronauts a little later), these beings were sent to Earth to watch over humanity (other scripture refers to the Nephilim as the ‘Watchers’). They were apparently commanded to watch over human progress, but were not allowed to make contact or otherwise interfere with the day-to-day life of mankind.

According to the Bible, these entities defied their orders and began to communicate with human beings. Not only that, scripture states that they found the “daughters of man to be fair” and decided to interbreed with them! Needless to say, God did not approve of this angelic hanky-panky and quickly put a stop to it. The narrative is shocking to say the least, yet after these few tantalizing verses, the Bible is mostly silent about this incredible event.

The story remained buried in Sitchin’s mind for decades, but it sprang to the surface when he began to study ancient Sumerian cuneiform. To his surprise, he uncovered accounts of all-too-similar encounters documented on the clay tablets. Chief among them, Sumerian legend recounts the tale of the Annunaki, some 200 celestial beings who descended to Earth and began to influence humanity. Interestingly enough, the long-lost biblical Book of Enoch, only rediscovered in the 18th century, specifically states that it was a band of exactly 200 angels who “left their first estate” of heaven in order to cause mischief on Earth.

Sitchin began to find such intriguing similarities everywhere he looked, but it was in the Sumerian telling of events that he found the clearest explanation as to who the Nephilim he learned about in Torah school really were. According to Sitchin, one ancient Sumerian text reveals that the Annunaki/Nephilim were ancient astronauts who came to Earth from a planet on the edge of our solar system called Niburu on a mission to mine gold.

And these aliens weren't simply wishing to craft fine jewelry. As Sitchin tells it, these ancient astronauts needed gold for their very survival. Since Niburu was so far from the sun, the planet relied on an extremely thick atmosphere to retain heat. However, due to pollution, natural disasters, and possibly even nuclear war, the world's atmosphere was beginning to thin. From what Sitchin gleaned from the clay tablets, the solution that the Annunaki discovered for their dilemma was the creation of a planetary heat-trapping shield composed of fine gold particles.

Unfortunately, Niburu had long since depleted its own gold reserves, and so it was that these ancient astronauts came to Earth to extract this vital resource. The tablets spoke of a group of 200 Annunaki astronauts who left their home world on an expedition to the third planet from the Sun. Sitchin also maintains that there is archaeological evidence of an Annunaki mining operation in the Persian Gulf, and another in Southeast Africa, going back as far as 400,000 years ago.

Then the story gets more elaborate. Supposedly, these long-lived extraterrestrials toiled relentlessly for about 100,000 years, until the Annunaki workers assigned to the task grew weary of their role and mutinied against their supervisors. With their regular work crews on strike, the Annunaki began looking for labor elsewhere, and the best candidates were the primitive human beings they encountered.

However, these early humans were not as evolved as men and women are today. To make them useful, the Annunaki had to give human genetics a jumpstart by splicing their DNA with our own. Thus, the Sumerian text deals with the same interbreeding of human and alien entities that the Book of Genesis does with its mention of Nephilim. But as opposed to the Bible's somewhat romantic account of angels making love with humans, the Sumerian text describes a much more clinical, scientific procedure conducted in a laboratory setting.

Sitchin says that the text designates the first of these biologically engineered humans as the "Adamah". It's impossible not to note the similarity between Adamah and the biblical first man, Adam, but these first humans weren't

made of dirt so much as mixed-together genetic material inside test tubes. Sitchin likens the process to modern in vitro fertilization and claims that it is described in great detail on various Sumerian clay tablets.

He even points to some rather convincing illustrations found in Mesopotamia as proof. This ancient artwork shows the Annunaki carrying objects that look remarkably like glass test tubes. Meanwhile, another being seems to be presenting a child—a brand-new, living, breathing, humanoid life form, the end result of their experimentation—to the others.

If we are to take the writings of the ancient Sumerians literally, modern humanity is the result of ancient astronauts "playing God"(as Sitchin puts it) with our DNA. To be clear, Sitchin does not believe that these beings *were* gods, or in any way godlike. He maintains that they were flesh and blood humanoids just like us; they simply had advanced technology that allowed them to take advantage of the opportunity to manipulate our DNA. In this sense, the Annunaki didn't create humanity any more than they created themselves. Rather, they took what was already there—a primitive ape-man—and used their knowledge of genetic engineering to create a new, improved version.

Sitchin theorizes that Niburu and Earth were "genetically compatible" from the very beginning, and this allowed such interspecies crossbreeding to take place. He states that the "seed of life" that allowed the Annunaki to evolve on their world was the same initial genetic spark present on Earth. While the Annunaki were in a more advanced stage, the commonality allowed their scientists to realize the potential for humanity, and so they decided to jumpstart the evolution of human DNA.

According to Sitchin, human beings would have naturally evolved much the same way without Annunaki interference, just over a much longer period of time. All the Annunaki did was speed the process up. Far from being god-like creators breathing life into clay, these ancient astronauts were just skilled geneticists manipulating the human genome. Of course, this only becomes clear through the lens of modern understanding. The ancient Sumerians—even if the Annunaki themselves tried to dissuade them—no doubt would

have insisted that these beings who descended from the sky were gods.

In Sitchin's interpretation, the Sumerian narrative identifies two top Annunaki genetic engineers: Enki and Ninti. Interestingly, besides being research partners who conducted many experiments together, these two scientists also appear to have been lovers! Ninti is described as a beautiful Annunaki female who ends up romantically involved with the lead scientist —a male Annunaki named Enki.

As the Sumerian texts elaborate, the Annunaki stationed on Earth, far away from their homeland, often ended up bored and with a lot of time on their hands. And during their free time, they engaged in the same kind of extracurricular relationships that bored modern humans would. With Enki and Ninti working at the same outpost, doing the same kind of monotonous research in the same lab, romance was almost inevitable.

The Sumerian text captures the whole drama in perfect detail. In some passages the Annunaki couple seem somewhat mischievous, creating odd humanoids just for the fun of it. At one point the two genetically engineer a human without sexual organs. In another instance their experiments resulted in a man who "could not hold back his urine". It's as if these Annunaki lovebirds Enki and Ninti created a guy with urinary incontinence just so they would have something funny to talk about during their lunch breaks in the lab!

In one passage, Ninti is even shown joking flippantly about the oddities being created: "How good or bad is man's body? As my heart prompts me, I can make its fate good or bad!" (Cue canned Annunaki laughter.) If we are to believe these translations of Sumerian cuneiform tablets, early man was at the mercy of the capricious whims of strange beings who used him not just as a guinea pig but as the butt of their jokes!

Eventually, however, Enki and Ninti buckled down to business, perfected their methodology, and managed to engineer the first human beings. These humans were made in the image of the Annunaki in all but one respect—their lifespan. While to the long-lived Annunaki "a day was like a thousand years",

human life was purposefully programmed to be shorter. Offsetting this shorter lifespan was the capability given to humanity to “be fruitful and multiply”—which rapidly created a massive workforce to mine for gold.

Yes, instead of lounging in a paradisiacal Garden of Eden, these first Adams and Eaves were sent to do hard labor in the gold mines! Their sole purpose in life was to dig up golden deposits for their Annunaki taskmasters. Is it for this reason that people the world over have it burned into their consciousness that gold is valuable? Was this idea of gold’s worth hardwired into our ancestral memory during the backbreaking labor humanity endured in the mines of the Annunaki?

Over the next few thousand years, humans procured vast quantities of this precious resource for their alien masters, but eventually the Annunaki grew weary of their creation. According to the Sumerian legend best documented in the Epic of Gilgamesh, the Annunaki decided to wipe out mankind and start all over again from scratch. Sitchin’s translation of Sumerian texts shows that the Annunaki began a campaign of passive extermination by simply withdrawing important aid from the humans. Food became scarce and many starved, but mankind proved much heartier than the Annunaki had realized, and humanity as a whole was in no danger of extinction.

Fortuitously, the Annunaki were presented with another opportunity for man’s annihilation when scientists aboard an orbiting spacecraft determined that the gravitational pull from the next passing of Niburu would tug on the Earth’s icecaps enough to make them slip into the ocean, raising the sea level and creating a worldwide flood. The Annunaki assumed that the calamity would destroy humanity without them having to lift a finger (or whatever equivalent digit they possessed). All they had to do was keep the matter to themselves and wait for watery Armageddon.

But as it turned out, Enki—the lead scientist on the project—wasn’t willing to let his prized creation be completely destroyed. And so he defied orders and devised a means to save some human specimens. According to Sitchin, Enki created a special submersible vessel in which he placed handpicked humans he wished to survive the disaster. In this submarine-style ark, these

lucky individuals were able to endure the deluge that wiped out all of their brethren.

Just prior to the flood, the Annunaki stationed on the Earth evacuated and took to their “chariots” to ascend to the heavens. The Annunaki sat out the onslaught in their spacecraft, orbiting the planet and watching the waves cover the entire Earth. As soon as the waters subsided, they reentered the Earth’s atmosphere and landed on top of Turkey’s Mount Ararat.

Coinciding with the biblical narrative, the human survivors of the flood landed their own protective vessel here as well. Enki was harshly reprimanded when it was discovered that he had spared a few select specimens of humanity, but in the end, he was able to convince his superiors that it was necessary to keep a few good humans around after all.

It turns out—and once again, this ties back into the biblical narrative—that the chief complaint against the “human program” was that some of the Annunaki had indeed found the daughters (and also the sons) of man to be fair and had begun to interbreed with them. This wrecked the desired parameter of a short human lifespan, since the children of these unions ended up living a lot longer than a normal human being would. Annunaki high command was concerned that these long-lived upstarts would advance too rapidly for them to control and had therefore slated them for destruction.

And according to the Sumerian narrative, they had been right to worry. Even with a shortened lifespan, the descendants of the survivors of the flood began to create consternation at Annunaki headquarters once again—simply by being too darned smart for their own good. Sitchin points to a Sumerian telling of what most of us are familiar with as the biblical “Tower of Babel” story to indicate yet another Annunaki intervention to stunt the growth of man.

The Bible speaks of the Land of Shin’ar, in which humanity had at one time banded together in the great city of Babylon with the goal of building a tower “whose head would reach the heavens”. There is a very similar Sumerian equivalent of this account, but Sitchin would have us believe that the

Sumerian tale tells us much more about just what the ancient Babylonians were up to. According to Sitchin, they weren't just building a skyscraper made of bricks; they were constructing a launch pad from which they could shoot rockets into space!

Annunaki leadership determined that humans, even with their shortened lifespan, had become a bit too crafty for their own good, and so these ancient astronauts employed a classic divide-and-conquer strategy. Humans initially all spoke the same language, but the Annunaki reprogrammed them to have many different languages in order to slow down the pace of innovation. It seemed that if these early humans worked together, they could do anything—and so it was that the Annunaki deliberately confused their tongues to bring their collaboration to a screeching halt.

So, after wading through all of these wild and fantastic tales, just what are we to make of the ancient Annunaki astronauts? Are these accounts just the workings of an ancient Sumerian's overactive imagination? Or are they eyewitness testimony of not only alien contact, but alien intervention at all levels of human progress? Zachariah Sitchin passed away in 2010, but much of his life's work is still being processed. Only time will tell how wrong or how right his claims of ancient Annunaki astronauts really were.

Ancient Astronauts of the Bible

Many of the Bible's most dramatic accounts of possible encounters with ancient astronauts have already been described in the previous chapter, so for the sake of avoiding repetition we'll only touch on those briefly here. As discussed previously, one of the most controversial of these alleged encounters is that with the Nephilim. Many believe that the Nephilim of the Bible and the Annunaki of Sumerian legend are the same entities. From the biblical perspective, though, these beings are depicted primarily as angels cast down to the Earth who defy the rules of the creator by intermingling with humanity.

There are only a few direct mentions of these strange beings in the traditional, canon Bible—a brief mention in the Book of Genesis, a reference in a passage from the Book of Numbers, and a short description in the Book of Jude in the New Testament. The Book of Jude, which describes in detail how the Nephilim "left their first estate" of heaven in order to mingle with humanity, actually hearkens back to the apocryphal Book of Enoch. But while the Book of Enoch is not part of biblical canon now, it was at one

point.

The decision to exclude it was made in the year 381 AD during the Council of Laodicea. Early theologians apparently deemed Enoch's wild stories of angels interbreeding with humans a bit too incredible to believe, and so they opted to leave the controversial book out of the next edition of the Bible. Most mainline churches followed this directive, and most of the original manuscripts of the text were lost to the dust of time over the centuries. Then, in the year 1773, a part-time archeologist / full-time adventurer, Scottish explorer James Bruce, found a copy of the long-lost tome fully intact, hidden away in a monastery in Ethiopia, and revealed its contents to the modern world.

The Book of Enoch picks up right where the mysterious verses about the Nephilim in the Book of Genesis leave off. Almost word for word, the Book of Enoch echoes, "And it came to pass, when the sons of men had increased, that in those days there were born to them fair and beautiful daughters. And the Angels, the sons of Heaven, saw them and desired them. And they said to one another, "Come, let us choose for ourselves wives, from the children of men, and let us beget for ourselves children."

First let's note that the Book of Enoch attempts to clarify just who these sons of Heaven were. It explicitly refers to them as being angels, whereas the verses in Genesis just leave us with the term "sons of God". However, the Book of Enoch goes further in its revelations about these entities—much further. Because right after these echoes of Genesis, we are inundated with detailed descriptions of these beings and their deeds, starting with the commander of the group.

As the Book of Enoch tells us, "And Semyaza, who was their leader, said to them, 'I fear that you may not wish this deed to be done and that I alone will pay for this great sin.' And they all answered him, and said, "Let us all swear an oath, and bind one another with curses, so not to alter this plan, but to carry out this plan effectively."

The plan, according to Enoch, was to descend to Earth and interbreed with

humans. But why would these celestial beings land on Earth simply to take pleasure from Earth women? To many, it seems that there must be something missing from the story Enoch tells. For example, as already related, ancient Near East scholar Zachariah Sitchin believes that the events involved purposeful genetic manipulation.

But sticking to the narrative as it unfolds in the Book of Enoch, these 200 otherworldly beings came down from the mountains in bands of ten, looking for women to take as their wives. Besides mating with these women, the angels also taught them special charms and spells, as well as advanced astronomy and other technological innovations which they were expressly forbidden to divulge.

The women then gave birth to their angelic progeny, and these half human / half angel offspring proved to be difficult to manage. The Book of Enoch states that these children, who were imbued with angelic power, relentlessly "devoured all the toil of men until men were unable to sustain them". Soon after this disastrous situation is described, the scene cuts to a depiction of the Archangels Michael, Gabriel, Suriel, and Uriel "looking down from Heaven" and discussing the havoc wreaked by their renegade brethren.

They acknowledge that the situation is so bad that the very souls of men are "complaining"—apparently, even the bodiless souls were crying out, "Bring our complaint before the Most High!" Or, as the Book of Enoch describes it, "And now behold the souls which have died cry out and complain unto the Gate of Heaven, and their lament has ascended, and they cannot go out in the face of the iniquity which is being committed on the Earth."

The Book of Enoch goes on to tell us that the Most High sent an angel named Arsyalayur to the "son of Lamech"—which according to scripture would be Noah—and instructed him to deliver an important message: "Say to him in My name: Hide yourself! And reveal to him the end, which is coming, because the whole Earth will be destroyed. A deluge is about to come on all the Earth, and all that is in it will be destroyed. And now teach him so that he may escape and his offspring may survive for the whole Earth." This account of a handpicked group of people being spared from a global flood, of course,

lines up with both the biblical flood story and the Sumerian legend.

Before we go into the Enoch variation of the saga, it is important to note earlier passages in the Book of Enoch which introduce us to Noah's strange backstory. Enoch describes Noah's father Lamech as being distressed and perplexed when he realizes that there is something very strange about Noah's countenance. His hair is of a very light hue, and his skin and eyes seem to shine with an unearthly glow—quite literally lighting up the room.

Wondering what the deal was, Noah's worried father Lamech consulted his own father, Methuselah, who in turn consulted his own dear old dad—Enoch. At the end of this biblical game of telephone, Enoch informed Methuselah that the boy's odd appearance was God's will. He also instructed him to tell Lamech, "that the one who has been born is truly his son. And call his name Noah, for he will be a remnant for you, and he and his sons will be saved from the destruction which is coming on the Earth because of all the sin and all the iniquity, which will be committed on the Earth in his days."

After this revelation of the special role that Noah would play, Enoch goes on to describe how celestial beings revealed even more to him. (It may amuse the modern reader of this narrative to know that Enoch announces that these entities presented their revelation to him on "tablets of Heaven". Tablets of Heaven? Well, we can certainly get a good laugh at old Enoch's expense if we imagine some ancient astronauts dictating their lessons to him on the alien equivalent of the Microsoft Touch!)

It remains unclear just what these tablets were, but the basic gist of what Enoch was shown was that "generation upon generation" of humanity will "do wrong", until a "generation of righteousness shall arise". Some ancient astronaut theorists claim that this is a reference to genetic manipulation eventually producing a perfected generation, but of course the more conventional view is that it refers to the state of man's soul rather than his DNA. At any rate, Enoch was informed that the onus would be on Noah, whose name translates as "remnant", to save what was left of humanity.

The next incident in the biblical narrative that might be seen as an encounter

with ancient astronauts occurs a little further on in the Book of Genesis. It involves the biblical patriarch Lot. Lot lived in the doomed city of Sodom, which had been slated for destruction by God because its inhabitants were a very sinful lot.

But before judgment day arrived, God sent down his own personal emissaries to do one final fact-finding tour—as well as to warn Lot, who was just about the only good man left in town. Lot was simply passing time, sitting at the city gates of Sodom, when he noticed two peculiar entities approaching. The Bible doesn't say just what these beings looked like, but it is apparent by Lot's reaction that he immediately realized that they were not your average visitors to the city. As soon as he saw them, Lot put on his best face, greeted the visitors, and insisted that they allow him to indulge them in the customary Middle Eastern hospitality.

This is interesting, because most of the time when people encounter angels in the Bible they are immediately overtaken by great fear. In fact, in almost every other biblical account of angels, the first thing the angel feels obligated to say is "do not be afraid". But besides his eagerness to please his special guests, Lot did not seem terribly terrified of them—and as events later that night would prove, no one else in Sodom was particularly frightened of the visitors either.

In fact, when Lot's neighbors heard that he was playing host to a couple of otherworldly beings, instead of becoming frightened, they became jealous and began to demand access to the visitors! It seems that, for whatever reason, the residents of Sodom were used to such close encounters and even actively sought them out. As the evening progressed, Lot's neighbors, apparently feeling as if they were missing out on the action, surrounded his house and began to shout demands such as "Where are the men who came unto you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them."

Later theologians have often assumed that the depraved residents of Sodom were speaking in the biblical sense and were actually demanding to have sex with the angels (although there are also a number of alternative theories). But whatever the case may be, when Lot refused to introduce his visiting angels

to the crowd, the brazen group attempted to break down his door. At this point the beings intervened by striking the entire frenzied mob blind. According to scripture, they “smote the people who were at the house’s entrance with blindness, both young and old; and they wearied themselves trying to find the doorway.”

Their assault had apparently been enough for the angels to make up their minds, however, and they determined that Sodom had to be destroyed. Turning to Lot, they advised him, “Who else hast thou here besides thee—a son-in-law, thy sons and daughters, and any other relatives—all who are in the city—bring them out from this place, for we are about to destroy it.”

When Lot told his son-in-law about this the next day, however, he was met with incredulous laughter, and so in the end it was only Lot, his wife, and his two unmarried daughters who evacuated the city. Shortly after Lot was out of the danger zone, Sodom, along with the neighboring city of Gomorrah, was completely incinerated. The Bible tells us, “Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And he overthrew those cities and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.”

Many have since pointed out the eerie similarities between this biblical description and a nuclear blast. A nuclear explosion is, after all, the only thing we know of that can raze an entire city to the ground and even vaporize all signs of vegetation. Another telling aspect of the story is the ominous warning given by the angels to “not look back”. Lot’s wife, perhaps growing sentimental about leaving their old city, did indeed look back, though. As a result, she turned into a pillar of salt—or as some translations would have it, into vapor. In other words, Lot’s wife was vaporized!

What strange burst of energy would cause such a thing? Was it really the divine judgment of the Creator, or was it the weaponry of ancient astronauts? And even if ancient astronauts had been tampering with humanity, why would they have found it necessary to lay waste to ancient Neolithic cities with nuclear bombs?

The biblical patriarch Jacob had a decidedly less lethal encounter with a mysterious being, but one that was still altogether strange. It happened when he was crossing the Jordan late at night on his way back to the land of Canaan from a cross-country trip to Harran. His crossing was interrupted when he ran into a strange man who blocked his path. Jacob began to wrestle with this entity, and the match was so intense it lasted until the break of day. Only after it finally ended did Jacob realize that it wasn't a man he had been wrestling with—it was a celestial being. From then on, Jacob called the site of his wrestling match "Peni-El", or as it were, "the Face of God".

Jacob had one more interesting encounter in store for him before he reached home. Again, it was late at night, and Jacob decided to stop and rest. The next thing he knew he was woken up by flashing lights and saw above him a strange hovering vehicle, with a ladder descending from an opened door all the way to the ground. Ascending and descending the ladder were beings that Jacob believed to be the heavenly host.

Ancient astronaut theorists point to the story of Jacob's ladder as a clear-cut case of ancient alien visitation. They believe that the flashing, hovering object that Jacob saw was a UFO with a ramp on which aliens were going in and out.

To help us understand their point of view, let's just transfer Jacob's story to a modern setting. Imagine, for example, a young man on a hiking trip, relating the same exact encounter. Even those who don't believe in UFOs would most likely assume that a UFO encounter was what the young hiker was describing. Or if someone claimed that they had fallen asleep while camping in the woods and woken up to a strange object with flashing lights hovering over them—cue the *X-Files* theme song playing in our head! Even if we thought he was making the whole story up, we would immediately understand that he was making up a story about a visitation by an alien craft.

So why is it we don't have the same reaction when we hear of the exact same kind of sighting in accounts such as Jacob's ladder? It was this sort of questioning that kicked off much of the interest in the concept of ancient astronauts in the first place.

Moving on from Jacob, the next biblical figure that many argue may have been visited by ancient astronauts was the patriarch Moses. Just to give a little bit of background for the story, remember that Moses was the son of Hebrew slaves but had been adopted by the Egyptian royal family. He became a high-ranking official, but one day he saw an Egyptian overseer cruelly kill a Hebrew slave. Moses flew into a rage and lashed out without thinking, killing the overseer. He then fled to the desert to escape the repercussions.

While he was hiding out in the desert he happened upon Mt. Horeb, the "Mountain of God", and it was here that he encountered a strange luminous object which he referred to as a "burning bush". Moses described a bush that was on fire with an intense luminosity yet somehow never completely burned up, but ancient astronaut proponents contend that it was actually a technological object. The luminosity, they claim, came either from intense artificial lighting or from some more exotic technology such as a protective force field.

The Bible tells us that as Moses looked at this burning bush he heard a voice emanating from it which issued the warning "Do not come any closer." Moses froze in his tracks and stared at the strange manifestation before him as it ordered, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." The bush then stated, "I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." The burning bush thus displayed an intimate knowledge of Moses' genealogy, which was often very important in the ancient Middle East.

The voice went on to say that it was deeply concerned about how the Hebrew people were being treated in Egypt. Moses was told that the Hebrews were to be rescued and escorted out of Egypt to a new "land of milk and honey" where they could live in happiness and peace. The entity then ordered Moses to return to Egypt to be the messenger of these tidings. Moses was awestruck, but still hesitant in the face of such a tremendous task, he began to dither.

Stalling for time, he asked the burning bush, "Suppose I go to the Israelites

and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?” To this the burning bush replied, “I AM who I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’“

Theologians and scholars have pondered over this phrase ever since. For the more metaphysically minded among us, such a statement coming from an eternal God without beginning or end makes perfect sense. As they see it, God is revealing a great secret of the inner workings of the universe. Where did God come from? Who created Him? No one. God exists simply because he wills himself to exist! Or, as the burning bush described it, “I AM who I AM”.

Judaism has also been heavily influenced by this detail of Moses’ encounter with the burning bush. Because when Moses asked God what his name was, he was informed that God was simply “I AM”, Jews traditionally believe that God’s name is too holy to even be mentioned.

Moses had another encounter with the divine—or with an ancient astronaut, depending on your perspective—when he was leading the Hebrew people out of Egypt. We all know the story of Moses lifting his staff before the waters that separated the Hebrews from their freedom, and how the Red Sea parted before the multitude. But many forget the fact that a strange, luminous object was hovering over the sea at the exact same time. Many ancient astronaut theorists believe that the sea parted not because Moses raised his staff, but because a hovering spacecraft utilized an electromagnetic or gravitational force field to separate the waters and create a path of dry land for the Israelites to use in their escape.

This craft would continue to be an ever-present aspect of the Exodus narrative as it led the Hebrews through the wilderness. The—for lack of a better word—UFO presented itself as a luminous cloud (perhaps saucer shaped) during the day and as a pillar of fire (maybe lit up by flashing lights) at night. It was so bright that the Hebrews could easily travel through the nighttime darkness of the desert with it lighting their path. Many miracles were attributed to this object as well, such as the production of a nutritious

food that the Hebrews called manna, or bread from heaven. This bread would just rain down from the craft, and the hungry Hebrews would go out and collect it in baskets, then eat it for the rest of the day.

It is interesting to note that the hovering object is referred to as a cloud during daytime sightings. All throughout the Bible, airborne anomalies are often referred to as clouds. Half of the time the reference is clearly to nothing more than a common rain cloud, but in many other instances these so-called clouds are just as clearly something else entirely. For example, when the Bible says that someone was “taken up” by a cloud, it’s most certainly not describing a meteorological phenomenon!

The Exodus “cloud” did not confine itself to hovering over the Israelites as they trekked through the wilderness. On occasion it would also land on Mt. Sinai for private consultations with Moses. However, the biblical narrative leaves us in the dark as to the details of what transpired between Moses and the cloud; in many cases we are just told what Moses was like when he came down from the mountain. In the famous instance in which he returned to camp with the ten commandments etched on stone tablets, for example, we are informed that Moses’ face was “lit up like the sun” and his skin had an unearthly glow. What could this mean? Many ancient astronaut proponents have proposed that Moses’ skin was glowing because he had been subjected to some form of intense radiation.

Another biblical figure who had dramatic encounters with strange celestial objects is the prophet Ezekiel. Ezekiel was in a region called Harran—the same place from whence Jacob was returning when he wrestled the angel—on the banks of the Khabur River when he saw a startling sight. There appeared a sudden “whirlwind” from which Ezekiel was beset by strange objects with flashing lights. Ezekiel also describes this object as a “great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness was all around it and radiating out of its midst like the color of amber”. Of course, as mentioned earlier, the vocabulary for describing odd aerial phenomena was somewhat limited in Ezekiel’s day, and the Bible refers to all manner of large hovering objects as clouds. So in order to better understand exactly what Ezekiel was attempting to describe, allow me to quote his account in its entirety:

And I looked, and behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire. Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man. And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings. And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the color of burnished brass. And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings. Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward. As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle. Thus were their faces: and their wings were stretched upward; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies. And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went. As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning. Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces. The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the color of beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel. When they went, they went upon their four sides: and they turned not when they went. As for the rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four. And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them: and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature was as the color of the terrible crystal,

stretched forth over their heads above.

Creatures with four faces and four wings which sparkled like burnished bronze? Just what is Ezekiel talking about? According to proponents of the ancient astronaut theory, Ezekiel was logging an eyewitness account of the landing of an alien spacecraft! Following this interpretation of events, the "whirlwind" was the entry of the vehicle into the Earth's atmosphere. The "great cloud" was the craft itself, and as for the "fire infolding itself" and the "brightness" that was "about it", this is interpreted as being some sort of protective force field, which was "the color of amber" and was visible to the naked eye. From the larger craft emerged four smaller scout craft, which Ezekiel in his limited understanding could only perceive to be "four living creatures".

Now, *you* probably wouldn't mistake an aircraft for an animal, but you have to realize that Ezekiel lived before the invention of any kind of mechanized transportation. For him, anything that moved was alive. If you were to travel back in time and drive a car by poor old Ezekiel, he would no doubt assume that your Honda Civic was a living creature simply because it moved! Furthermore, Ezekiel observed that the "four living creatures" had straight legs. It is the ancient astronaut belief that this is because these "legs" were actually landing gear or shock absorbers for the craft.

Ezekiel then describes the landing of the craft and the emergence of the four occupants. He says the beings had the likeness of man—in other words, the entities were humanoid in shape, having two legs, two arms and one head. But puzzlingly, Ezekiel also tells us that they had "four faces". Those who believe in the ancient astronaut interpretation have concluded that this is Ezekiel's clumsy attempt to explain the head gear that the entities were wearing. Could the four faces have been different lenses of the creatures protective helmets? Likewise, when Ezekiel describes wheels within wheels all ringed with eyes, might the eyes have been flashing lights? What did Ezekiel really see? Was it a visitation of the divine or the extraterrestrial kind?

It is interesting to note that Ezekiel's sighting began with the appearance of a

“whirlwind” or energy vortex on the horizon, because it just so happens that another famous biblical patriarch, Elijah, and his young pupil Elisha had just the same experience. As scripture tells us, “And it came to pass, as they [Elijah and Elisha] still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind to into heaven.”

If the “chariot of fire” in which Elijah ascended was an alien craft, the “whirlwind” could have been the disturbance as it entered and exited the atmosphere. And as for Elijah himself, who was never seen again, could we say that he was the first recorded victim of an alien abduction? As is usually the case with this subject matter, it all depends on who you talk to, and in any event many people on both sides feel that the visions of the Old Testament patriarchs are too full of symbolism and double meanings to make reliable eyewitness testimony.

But if the Old Testament is too remote for these skeptics, would the New Testament be any more convincing? As it turns out, the New Testament has one of the Bible’s most intriguing accounts of an unidentified flying object, and it comes right at the very beginning. The first book of the New Testament is the Book of Mathew, and it is here that we find the story of the Star of Bethlehem. In this account, three “Magi” or “Wise Men” from the East see an unusual looking star in the sky, and from it they learn that a King is born.

At first glance, this seems like nothing more than astrology. Casting horoscopes and reading astrological charts was, after all, a common pastime among “wise men” of the era. But the Magi were not only observing the star, they were actively following it. This star was apparently mobile, and modern astronomy has taught us that stars are distant suns that are fixed in place and cannot move across the sky. So we can conclude that this celestial object was not a “star” in the conventional sense of the word.

Of course, it is still possible, as many have suggested, that the object which the Magi referred to as a star was actually a comet. Comets are luminous objects that do indeed move across the sky on a regular basis. A comet would also represent a major sign for any would-be astrologer, since comets were

genuinely believed to coincide with major events—such as the birth of a King. Thus, the idea of the Star of Bethlehem being a comet fits the narrative quite nicely—so far.

But the comet theory gets completely thrown out the window with the verse "When they saw that the star had stopped, they were filled with great joy." No comet is able to stop and hover in place. So we seem to be presented with a choice of two impossibilities: a star that can move, or a comet that can stop moving.

In sum, the Bible informs us that the Star of Bethlehem was a bright object in the sky; that it moved to lead the Wise Men to the exact spot where Jesus was born; and that it then silently hovered over the location where the young Christ child slept. Then the Star of Bethlehem quietly fades into the background as the narrative moves on to show the Magi introducing themselves to Jesus' family and bestowing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

What was this mysterious object associated with the story of the Nativity? What was it that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah? What kind of craft appeared amid whirlwinds of energy in front of both Ezekiel and Elijah? These are mysteries that remain unanswered to this very day.

The Vimanas in the Vedas

For the next set of alleged encounters with ancient astronauts, we will turn our attention to India and the Vedas. The Vedas are pieces of Hindu scripture from the ancient civilizations of the Indian subcontinent. For thousands of years the Vedas existed as an oral tradition passed down from person to person. They were not fully compiled and written down until about 200 BC. Interestingly, the Hindus believe that the Vedas are not of human origin; the words of these sacred scriptures are said to have come from the Sky Gods themselves.

There are several Vedas that speak of strange flying craft called Vimanas in which the Sky Gods flew around the heavens. These vehicles are often described as shining with light and having the ability to move “swifter than thought”. The texts give the impression that the Vimanas could jump from place to place instantaneously, or at least at speeds faster than the human mind can process.

The craft were apparently multipurpose in nature, and much akin to modern USOs (unidentified submerged objects), they were able to submerge in the ocean as well as fly through the air. The Vimanas were very diverse in their makeup and architecture as well. Some were small scout vehicles, while others were as big as small cities. These humongous ships would land and function as a kind of palace or headquarters on the ground for several years before simply picking up and lifting off for somewhere else.

The Vedas also speak at some length about the pilots of these craft, who were known as “Ashvins”, which translates roughly as “drivers”. These pilots are said to be the “best charioteers who reach the heavens”.

Underneath the Vimanas were rotating wheels that created antigravity fields to levitate the vehicle and allow it to navigate in any direction. Are these the same “wheels within wheels” that Ezekiel spoke of? They certainly do sound similar.

However, in contrast Ezekiel’s one-off sighting, the ancient Indians appear to have coexisted with these Vimanas for many years and had encounters with them on a regular basis. The Vedas contain several stories of them engaging in last-minute interventions in human affairs—for example, the story of a man who nearly drowns but is saved by a Vimana that appears out of nowhere, pulls him out of the water, and places him back on dry land.

Also unlike Ezekiel, who likened the craft he witnessed to “living creatures” simply because they moved, the Indian writers clearly knew the difference between biological animal and technological machine. Incredibly, there are even verses in the Vedas that describe intricate details of the Vimanas’ propulsion system. Yes, full-blown engineering specs have been preserved for posterity! Take this tantalizing verse, for example:

Strong and durable must the body of the Vimana be made, like a great flying bird of light material. Inside one must put the mercury engine with its iron heating apparatus underneath. By means of the power latent in the mercury which sets the driving whirlwind in motion, a man sitting inside may travel a

great distance in the sky. The movements of the Vimana are such that it can vertically ascend, vertically descend, move slanting forwards and backwards. With the help of these machines, human beings can fly in the air, and heavenly beings can come down to Earth.

This verse makes it abundantly clear that the writer knew full well what a Vimana was for—"with the help of these machines, human beings can fly in the air". And not only that, he also knew that liquid mercury was used to fuel it! Since modern theories conjecture that mercury just might be the best propellant for space travel, this is truly incredible. It would appear that what we have here is either a vivid eyewitness account and basic technical knowledge of an exotic space craft—or a particularly prescient science fiction writer from antiquity!

The Vedas make a clear distinction between certain Vimanas that humans built and operated and other Vimanas that were built by the Sky Gods—or, as ancient astronaut theorists would have it, extraterrestrial visitors. Furthermore, the gods (or ETs) were divided into several different factions, and war often broke out among them. According to Vedic scripture, humanity witnessed—and may even have participated in—several such battles that were "fought on land, in the air, and beneath the seas". The Mahabharata tells us that one group of gods even created three large "cloud fortresses" that sound something akin to orbiting space battle stations. From these launching points they could engage their enemies on all corners of the Earth.

Similar warfare features in many other myths and legends around the world. In particular, many have noted the similarities between the Hindu tales and those of Norse mythology. Many of the characters and plots of the narratives are almost interchangeable. This is probably no coincidence, since it is believed that at some point in the distant past both Northern European and India were colonized by a single group of people referred to by historians and archeologists as "Indo-Europeans".

One clear bridge between Norse mythology and Hindu legend is the description of gods fighting each other in aerial battles using thunderbolt-type weapons. For example, the Norse god Thor, one of the best-known wielders

of weaponized thunderbolts, has a direct Indian equivalent in the deity recorded in Sanskrit records as Tanayitnu.

Thor, of course, is famous for his fantastical weapon Mjölnir. This hammer shoots out thunderbolts, but it is also a kind of “kinetic weapon”. Kinetic weapons are hard, blunt objects hurled at great speed so that they smash into their targets with tremendous kinetic energy. The principle is the same as an asteroid striking Earth—and asteroid impacts can equal or exceed nuclear explosions in power.

The US military has been working on such weapons since the early days of the Vietnam War, when hundreds of small metal projectiles were dropped from high altitude over the Vietnamese jungles to rain death on enemy encampments below. Coincidentally enough, the successor to these attempts at harnessing kinetic energy is a little something called Project Thor, in which one large projectile is used to create a devastating kinetic impact. This project, known informally as “rods from God”, now seeks to use 20-foot-long rods dropped from space which could completely obliterate entire cities without the drawback of nuclear fallout!

Vimanas? Thor’s hammer? What does it all mean?

Ancient Astronauts of Egypt and Peru

Egypt has long been a land of intrigue and mystery. The North African country can boast one of the world's oldest civilizations, rivaled perhaps only by ancient Mesopotamia, and Egypt, of course, contains the world's largest megalithic structures—those ever-mysterious beacons of the unknown past, the pyramids. Debate as to just who could have built these skyscrapers of the ancient world continues to this day. Since building such gigantic structures would be difficult even with modern construction equipment, it seems almost impossible that ancient man could have achieved such a feat. This has given ancient astronaut adherents a wonderful niche in which to posit their theories of alien visitation.

But what did the ancient Egyptians themselves say on the topic? According to Egyptian mythology (or history, depending on your perspective), Egypt was founded during an era known as "Zep Tepi" (which literally translates as "First Time") around the year 36,420 BC! If this were true it would make Egypt older than ancient Mesopotamia by some thirty thousand years!

According to the legend, it was during this time in the remote past that the gods came down from the heavens in their sky boats and began to build the megalithic structures we know today as the pyramids, the sphinx, and other massive structures. These beings ruled humanity directly at first before delegating their authority to demigods who were essentially half human and half divine.

Ancient astronaut theorists have jumped on these myths to make the astonishing assertion that the early rulers of Egypt were in fact alien/human hybrids! And it is true that the rulers of ancient Egypt were always depicted with somewhat unusual appearances. Compared to the average human of the day, these rulers were always very thin, with long arms and legs and large heads. The true size of their heads was usually obscured by the large Egyptian headdress that became the crown of the Pharaohs.

One of these supposed hybrid Egyptian kings was Akhenaten, who has long been hailed by historians as the "Alien Pharaoh"—if only to emphasize how different his rule was from the norm. Akhenaten, along with being the father of Tutankhamen, was famous for his efforts to change the traditional religion of Egypt. Instead of encouraging his subjects to believe in the established polytheistic pantheon of Egyptian gods, Akhenaten made an abrupt about-face and decreed that all Egyptians must worship just one god—the sun god Aten.

This sudden change in religious protocol is comparable to when the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great decided to make Christianity the official law of the land, but it did not prove as successful. Many Egyptians began to push back against Akhenaten's decree almost immediately, and as soon as he died, the priesthood systemically destroyed all artifacts and monuments associated with him and quickly returned the country to its traditional polytheism.

All of this was done under the direction of Akhenaten's own son and successor, King Tutankhamen. Many people are not aware that Tutankhamen's birth name was actually "Tutankhaten", which translates as "the living image of Aten". This, of course, begs the question: If King Tut's father deemed him to be a cloned facsimile—a carbon copy—of the sun god

Aten, then just who was Aten, and how was it that Tut was made in his image? The very question hearkens back to the opening passages of Genesis in which God says, “Let us make man in our image.”

Whatever the case may be, this was a comparison that King Tut apparently wished to avoid at all costs. As soon as his father passed away, he changed his name to Tutankhamen. (This brings to mind the old history class joke about King Tut shirking his alleged divinity by saying, “Tutankhaten? Nope! I’m Tutan-Common! Not a god! I promise! I’m just a regular common guy!”)

But as much as Tut may have wanted to distance himself from the celestial background he inherited, he had certain characteristics that weren’t too common at all. Just like his dead father, Tut had an elongated skull. Studies have also shown that this was not a mere deformity (such as that induced by the practice of tying boards to an infant’s head to flatten the bones). On the contrary, Tut’s skull was larger, longer, and had increased cranial capacity relative to an average human being—meaning that it could hold a bigger brain.

Not a lot is known about King Tut’s life, but he lived it set apart from the rest of society. He ruled from when he was 9 until he met an abrupt end at the age of 18. It seems that he was assassinated, as his mummified body bears the telltale signs of blunt force trauma to the head. Nevertheless, Tut was preserved and mummified in the traditional fashion, with the same promise of eventual resurrection when the gods returned.

This brings us to another important aspect of the alleged Egyptian connection with ancient astronauts. It is speculated that the Egyptians may have picked up their practice of mummification either directly or indirectly from alien visitors. Some believe that mummification was an attempt by the ancients to imitate a technique by which the aliens preserved and possibly even resurrected their own dead. Others contend that the Egyptians were actually ordered to mummify their dead by extraterrestrials—and told that when the ETs returned, the mummified corpses would be resurrected.

According to ancient astronaut theorists, this explains why the ancient

Egyptians developed a religious burial practice that revolved around mummifying their dead. As we know, they not only sealed the mummified bodies up inside tombs, they also packed in gold, jewelry, and all other items precious to the deceased. This is indicative of their strong belief that the dead would be fully reanimated when the "gods" returned. The Egyptians were so adamant in this belief that the servants of a deceased potentate would often willingly allow themselves to be buried alive with their ruler. After all, they fully expected that as soon as "Reanimation Day" occurred, they would spring to life and be able to serve their master once again!

And the Egyptians were not the only ancients to practice mummification. The pre-Columbian inhabitants of Peru were quite prolific with this process as well. The art of mummy making was carried out in this region of South America for the better part of 7,000 years, but the best preserved of these mummies date back to the Inca period, just about 500 years ago.

The Inca regularly carried out human sacrifices, killing their victims at the summits of mountains and leaving them there for their gods to pick up. (Although the Spanish conquistadors justifiably get a bad rap for their wanton destruction of Native American culture, they must also get some credit for stopping this murderous rite practiced by both the Inca and the Aztecs to the north.) But besides sacrificial victims, the Andean stomping grounds of ancient Peruvian civilization are chock full of mummies. Just like the Egyptians, the Peruvians seemed convinced that if they preserved the bodies of their dead well enough, they would one day be resurrected and resume their earthly lives.

Mummies, though, are not the only thing that the ancients of Peru are known for. Even more legendary are the Nazca Lines, a series of intelligently carved lines spanning several miles and forming what some have termed "runways" as well as more intriguing shapes such as a giant spider, a monkey, and even a strange humanoid entity. Erich Von Daniken, the famed author of the ancient astronaut book *Chariots of the Gods*, studied the lines and discovered that they were even more intricate than had been supposed, as they included complex mathematical equations seemingly etched in the surrounding foothills.

These lines are actually a fairly recent discovery; they only became known to the modern world in the 1920s when pilots spotted them from the air. Because the crazy thing about these ancient etchings in the sand is that you can only *see* them from the air. Just whose airborne attention were the Peruvians trying to get?

The most accepted theory is that the large drawings were simply part of a religious ritual meant to get the attention of the gods that Peruvians believed to inhabit the sky. But as we have seen time and time again, these sky gods and ancient astronauts are almost interchangeable. So instead of focusing on who the drawings were made for, perhaps we should first consider how they were made.

Drawing upon the arid Nazca plateau is actually quite easy. All you have to do is scrape away the red surface rock and expose the whitish soil underneath. The fact that rain, strong wind and other disturbances are exceedingly rare in this region will then ensure that the lines you have made stay in place. So making the lines is easy enough; no mystery there.

Making a meaningful illustration across miles of barren ground, on the other hand, seems next to impossible unless the illustrators had some idea of what their picture looked like from the air. If they couldn't see it from on high, they shouldn't have been able to visualize it well enough to create it on the ground. And so here we reach an obvious conundrum—thousands of years before flight was possible, how were these ancient Native Americans able to see the overall design from high up enough that it made sense to them?

Well, they could have gotten a lift from a friendly UFO, but a few more mundane theories have also been offered over the years. For example, it's possible that the Peruvians had developed a primitive hot air balloon and used this as a platform to direct the massive art projects etched into the Nazca plain. But since there is really no concrete proof of anything of the sort, such theories must be regarded as random speculation, and the true origin and modus operandi of the Nazca Lines remains a mystery.

Some have drawn parallels between these huge landscape murals and the crop circles that periodically pop up in various parts of the world. There certainly are similarities, but beyond the drawings, another major feature of the Nazca Lines is the presence of massive straight lines strewn all over the landscape. Von Daniken and others contend that these straight lines, which run across the desert for several miles, are nothing short of landing strips for ancient alien aircraft.

Some believe that the Nazca Lines were not just a Native American art project but rather a group effort between human beings and extraterrestrial entities. It was a kind of “learning experience” in which ETs hovering above directed humans working on the ground below just how to fashion the lines. Was this the same kind of partnership that ancient ETs had with the ancient Egyptians, or even the supposed gold miners of ancient Mesopotamia? Has it always been a case of ancient astronaut intellect and technology assisted by the brute force of humanity?

Ancient Astronauts of the Greeks and Romans

Greco-Roman civilization has long been hailed as a high point of antiquity, not only for technological development but also for advances in philosophy and civic society. The Greeks in particular were ahead of their time in many ways; we can thank them for such things as theater, the Olympics, and herbal medicine. Historians always knew the ancient Greeks were a clever bunch, but in the year 1900, when divers found an old Greek shipwreck off the shores of a Mediterranean island called Antikythera, everything we thought we knew about Greek knowledge had to be thrown out the window.

Nestled at the bottom of this long-submerged vessel was some very mysterious cargo from antiquity. Along with statues and other commonplace artifacts, there was a strange piece of machinery consisting of intricate gears, cogwheels and other moving parts, housed in a square gold-and-wood casing. What was this device? What was it for—and who made it? It was certainly

beyond any known technical capacity of the ancient Greeks.

Further examination revealed that the object was a kind of early analogue computer. It was a mechanized calculator seemingly a couple of thousand years ahead of its time, dating from before even the abacus was invented. It also seemed to have astronomical functions that would have allowed the user to follow the cycles of the sun, moon, and other planetary and celestial bodies. Nor were these just crude approximations; the exacting precision of this extraordinary device would not be duplicated until at least the 19th century.

If nothing more, this device stands out as cutting-edge Greek technology—but ancient astronaut theories contend that it represents more than just a clever prototype. Their theory is that aliens either directed humans to build the device or created it themselves and presented it to humanity as a gift.

And the Greeks did indeed claim a long history of celestial visitors coming down from the heavens to bestow all manner of special presents. Consider the legend of Prometheus from ancient Greek mythology. Prometheus was a member of a group of primordial beings called the Titans who visited the Earth in the remote past. These Titans had a form of Starfleet's "Prime Directive" and were forbidden from interfering directly with the affairs of humanity.

Prometheus, though, took pity on the struggling masses of mankind and broke the cardinal rule of non-interference by teaching primitive people how to make and use fire. It may seem like a harmless enough thing to show a caveman how to light a fire to keep his cave warm, but this small gesture of goodwill was enough to bring down the wrath of all of Prometheus's celestial colleagues. It was the Greek god Zeus who brought down the hammer by shackling the renegade Titan to an isolated mountain top where an eagle would spend the rest of eternity pecking away at his liver.

That'll teach him, right? But what does it all mean? Is there more to this myth than meets the eye? Could it be that the entire Greek Pantheon of gods and goddesses were actually ancient astronauts? And if so, why did some among

them chose to break ranks and risk everything to help humanity? Just whose side are we on, anyway? Or are we merely pawns caught in the middle? Perhaps there have always been two competing factions of ancient astronauts battling each other for supremacy.

The famed Jewish/Roman historian Josephus may have been an eyewitness to this titanic struggle in 65 AD when he was present for what sounds a lot like a mass UFO sighting over Israel. He recounted the event as follows: “On the 21st of the month of Artemisium, there appeared a miraculous phenomenon, passing belief. Indeed, what I am about to relate would, I imagine, have been deemed a fable, were it not for the narrative of eyewitnesses and the subsequent calamities which deserved to be so signalized. For before sunset throughout all parts of the country, chariots were seen in the air and armed battalions hurtling through the clouds and encompassing the cities.” Note that whatever Josephus and the other witnesses saw traveling through the skies was so incredible that Josephus admits that he wouldn’t have believed it if he hadn’t seen it himself! We can ascertain from this statement just how dramatic the phenomenon was.

The Roman historian Plutarch also mentioned an incredible UFO sighting. This one happened in 74 BC and involved several thousand soldiers who were marching through Turkey to take out the army of King Mithridates VI. According to Plutarch, “With no apparent change of weather, but all on a sudden, the sky burst asunder and a huge flame-like body was seen to fall between the two armies. In shape it was most like a wine jar and in color, like molten silver. This marvel, as they say, occurred in Phrygia, at a place called Otries.” Two armies were about to face off when a massive UFO deliberately dropped down between them. What are we to make of such cosmic interruptions? What message are these craft and their occupants trying to send?

Well, if you were to ask Constantine the Great, the Roman emperor who ushered in the age of Roman Catholic Christianity, the message was pretty clear. Before Constantine was emperor, he was leading an army in battle at the Milvian Bridge near Rome when he suddenly saw an illuminated cross flying through the sky! After seeing this cruciform UFO, Constantine heard

the words “by this sign you will conquer” reverberating through his mind.

Constantine was understandably shocked by the experience and didn’t know quite what to make of it at first. But the next night, he had a vision that made everything crystal clear. According to Constantine, he was visited by none other than Jesus Christ, who told him to place the symbol of the cross on the standards of his troops. As the story goes, Constantine did indeed conquer after this, bringing the fractured Roman Empire back together and eventually becoming emperor himself.

Over the centuries, some have argued that Constantine’s vision was either embellished after the fact or outright invented as a political ploy to advance Constantine’s personal ambitions. But Constantine himself never changed his testimony and always swore that what he had seen was an absolute fact. He apparently believed the story, so the real question is perhaps about his interpretation of what he saw.

In the third century AD when Constantine saw the object, the world was steeped in spiritual mysticism. If anything unusual occurred, it was reflexively thought of in spiritual terms. Very few people would have entertained the possibility that an airborne object could have been a technological device. Today, however, we have aircraft of our own and even rudimentary spacecraft. If we were to see a strange cigar- or cross-shaped object flying through the sky, we would be much less likely to attribute a divine nature to it.

But if it was not God but ancient astronauts who made their presence known to Constantine, what were they trying to accomplish? (And they were obviously trying to accomplish *something*; merely seeing an object in the sky could have been a coincidence, but hearing a voice and having a vision of Christ are another story entirely!) Believe what you will, but there are some conspiracy theorists who believe that ETs have been actively attempting to manipulate world events through religion.

If this were the case, it would make perfect sense to target Constantine, an up-and-coming general who was already poised to seize control of the Roman

Empire. Once Constantine took over, he would be able to implement his will on the populace, making an empire that once fed Christians to lions a bastion for Christ almost overnight. Of course, God Himself could have predicted this outcome just as easily as any ancient astronauts, and those who prefer Christianity to conspiracy theory maintain that the incident at Milvian Bridge was just as Constantine interpreted it: a divine act aimed at converting the Roman Empire.

As always, it all seems to depend on your interpretation of events.

China’s Dropa Stones

It is sometimes called the “Roswell of the East”—the story involving an alleged extraterrestrial crash in China several thousand years ago, the UFOnauts left behind, and the curious “Dropa Stones” they used. The story of the Dropa Stones begins in 1938, when Professor Chi, an archeologist at Peking University, took one of his classes on a field trip to Bayan-Kara-Ula on the border of Tibet and China.

This isolated region is home to a series of ancient, interconnected caves, and it was this complex subterranean region that the group set out to investigate. In one of these underground tunnels they came upon a hidden room that appeared to be a sort of tomb. Stepping inside they discovered several small humanoid skeletons approximately four feet in length. The skeletons had oversized heads and unusually delicate and diminutive bodies.

It was obvious just by looking at them that these skeletons were not normal, and Professor Chi knew that his team had made an unusual find. As he attempted to puzzle out what the skeletons might be, one of his students suggested that perhaps they were the remains of an undiscovered species of primate. Professor Chi slapped down this explanation, snapping impatiently at the student, “Who ever heard of apes burying one another?!?”

His refutation was proved correct as the group continued to investigate the site and uncovered several complex stone disks next to the skeletons. Looking strangely like vinyl LPs from an old record player, the disks were all about a foot wide, with holes in the center and continuous spiral grooves across the surface. Obviously, no ape could have left behind artifacts such as this!

Inside the cave there were also unusual drawings that seemed to depict the solar system and other celestial objects. Even more unusual, however, were a few depictions of what appeared to be non-human entities with odd helmets on their heads. These cave paintings were determined to be 12,000 years old. Still not sure exactly what they had found, the expedition team took notes on the site, packed up several of the stone disks, and returned to Beijing.

At the university, with the help of magnifying equipment, they made an astonishing discovery. The grooves contained hundreds of tiny hieroglyphic characters of an unknown language. Several attempts to decipher this unknown tongue were made, but there was no immediate progress and the disks were eventually shelved.

They remained in limbo until one Dr. Tsum Um Nui came to Peking University to take a crack at unlocking the language of the stones. This mysterious master linguist was indeed able to decipher the hieroglyphs carved into the grooves, and what he discovered was astonishing. The disks seemed to narrate a story composed by extraterrestrial visitors who had crash-landed on Earth!

When the Board of Directors of Peking University found out what Dr. Tsum

had uncovered, they were so unnerved by it that they ordered him to keep his findings secret. Being perhaps a more obedient investigator than most, Dr. Tsum agreed to keep a lid on the discovery, although he continued his study of the artifacts in private.

It isn't clear what caused the Board to have a change of heart, but a few years later they finally allowed Dr. Tsum to release his findings. He published the results of his exhaustive research under the heady title "The Grooved Script Concerning Spaceships Which as Recorded on the Disks Landed on Earth 12,000 Years Ago". You couldn't craft a much more descriptive title, and the phrasing inevitably garnered much notoriety.

According to the article, the stones told the tale of a group of shipwrecked extraterrestrials called the Dropa who had traveled to Earth from several light-years away. Their spaceship crashed somewhere in the Himalayan Mountains on the border of China and Tibet. In such a remote region, they could not find the materials to repair it or construct a new one. The Dropa were alarmed to find themselves marooned on an alien world, and realizing that they would be unable to defend themselves against its inhabitants without their advanced technology, they decided to hide in the local cave network. It was a fairly pathetic retreat for the proud spacefarers—and it wasn't even enough. A local group of prehistoric Chinese tribesmen soon found their subterranean hideout and began to hunt the aliens down!

This account of human / ancient astronaut interaction is markedly different from most of the others. While in other places ancient man bowed down to spacemen as gods, the ancient Chinese simply wanted to wipe them out! It seems that, bereft of the enchantment of advanced technology, the strange creatures the tribesmen encountered didn't seem too god-like at all. Instead, they were perceived as a grotesque aberration that was best destroyed.

Much of the rest of the story written on the Dropa Stones seems to have been lost with time. But perhaps even more astonishing than what was written on the stones is what happened when someone actually tried to play these ancient LPs on a turntable!

This part of the story began when some of the stone disks were shipped to the Soviet Union. (Red China was a loyal ally of the Soviets at the time, so a noteworthy find such as this was shared with the USSR as a matter of course.) Dr. Zaitsev, the lead Russian scientist to look into the Dropa stones, found that they contained extraordinarily high levels of cobalt and other rare minerals. That made it extremely unlikely that the artifacts could have been produced the people who inhabited Bayan-Kara-Ula 12,000 years ago. It would have been even more difficult for primitive humans to have carved the nearly microscopic lettering inside the grooves of the stone records.

Next, the Russian researcher checked the disks for electrical charge by running them through an oscillograph. To his amazement, he found a clear electrical pulse recorded within the grooves, indicating that they had at one time been used to conduct electricity. The Dropa Stones were becoming even more intriguing by the day.

Dr. Zaitsev then took the disks and did with them what I probably would have done with them on the very first day—he put them into a record player and tried to play them! Although the records didn't start playing music from Alpha Centauri (or wherever the Dropa hailed from) the disks did emit a loud hum.

After this, the Russian research into the matter seems to have stalled. We don't hear much more about the Dropa Stones until 1974, when Austrian engineer Ernst Wegerer allegedly found two of them in Banpo Museum in Xian, China. The disks were being displayed as part of an exhibit on ancient stone artifacts, but there was no real explanation as to what they were. Looking at the grooves, though, Wegerer knew that he had found something highly unusual. He snapped a couple of photos of the disks for future reference before asking the museum director about them. Strangely, the director was not able to provide any information about the disks, even though she was perfectly capable of expounding in extensive detail about every other item in the display. Even more oddly, both the disks and the museum director seem to have disappeared without a trace just a few days later.

Since the story of the Dropa Stones has reached a wider audience, more

investigations have been carried out in the region of Bayan-Kara-Ula. Although no more stone disks have been found, researchers have unearthed local legends of “small, gaunt, yellow-faced men who came from the clouds”.

Could these myths of midget spacemen be connected to the saga of the Dropa Stones? Stay tuned.

Ancient Astronauts over Renaissance Europe

On one strange day in April in 1561, the citizens of Nuremberg, Germany, were treated to a highly unusual sight. The sequence of events was recorded by a man named Hans Glaser, who was effectively the 16th century version of an investigative reporter. Glaser delivered his eyewitness account in the form of a newspaper article and woodcut drawings. It's fairly detailed and complex, so I'm going to go ahead and present it to you in its entirety:

In the morning of April 14, 1561, at daybreak, between 4 and 5 AM, a

dreadful apparition occurred on the sun, and then this was seen in Nuremberg, in the city, before the gates and in the country—by many men and women. At first there appeared in the middle of the sun two blood-red semi-circular arcs, just like the moon in its last quarter. And in the sun, above and below and on both sides, the color was blood. There stood a round ball of partly dull, partly black ferrous color. Likewise there stood on both sides and as a torus about the sun such blood-red ones and other balls in large number, about three in a line and four in a square, also some alone. In between these globes there were visible a few blood-red crosses, between which there were blood-red strips, becoming thicker to the rear and in the front malleable like the rods of reed-grass, which were intermingled, among them two big rods, one on the right, the other to the left, and within the small and big rods there were three, also four and more globes. These all started to fight among themselves, so that the globes, which were first in the sun, flew out to the ones standing on both sides, thereafter, the globes standing outside the sun, in the small and large rods, flew into the sun. Besides the globes flew back and forth among themselves and fought vehemently with each other for over an hour. And when the conflict in and again out of the sun was most intense, they became fatigued to such an extent that they all, as said above, fell from the sun down upon the Earth as if they all burned and they then wasted away on the earth with immense smoke. After all this there was something like a black spear, very long and thick, sighted; the shaft pointed to the east, the point pointed west. Whatever such signs mean, God alone knows. Although we have seen shortly one after another, many kinds of signs on the heaven, which are sent to us by the almighty God, to bring us to repentance, we still are, unfortunately, so ungrateful that we despise such high signs and miracles of God or we speak of them with ridicule and discard them to the wind, in order that God may send us a frightening punishment on account of our ungratefulness. After all, the God-fearing will by no means discard these signs, but will take them to heart as a warning of their merciful Father in heaven, will mend their lives and faithfully beg God, that he may avert his wraith, including the well-deserved punishment, on us, so that we may temporarily here and perpetually there, live as his children. For it, may God grant us his help, Amen.

To summarize, early in the morning, anomalous objects began to appear in

the skies over Nuremberg. The first to catch the attention of the citizenry were “two blood-red-semi-circular arcs”. Some have since tried to dismiss this as a description of a meteorological phenomenon known as a “dog-eared sun” in which the sun appears to have “dog ears” due to arcs of light that appear on each side.

However, the sightings described next seem to negate any possibility of a meteorological explanation. Glaser and others witnessed a round ball of “black ferrous color” simply floating in the air. This object obviously had real mass and shape; it was not a trick of lighting or an optical illusion. After this object, several more luminescent balls emerged. These floating balls then seemed to move in a concerted effort, creating floating formations in the sky. Glaser also details the sighting of two larger “rod-shaped” objects that emerged on either side of the armada of vessels. He also began to notice “blood-red crosses” flying through the air. (Constantine, remember, had seen a similar flying cross back in the third century.)

This diverse lot of UFOs apparently weren’t assembling in the sky above Nuremburg for some friendly ET get-together, because according to Glaser, the craft began to attack each other. Glaser reported that they “fought vehemently” for “over an hour”. He apparently saw craft get shot down and fall to the “Earth as if they all burned and they then wasted away on the Earth with immense smoke.” In the final round of the battle, Glaser describes a craft shaped like a long “black spear”. Was this one of the mother ships coming to gather up the survivors of the battle? Glaser’s narrative leaves us hanging; although the battle was clearly reaching its climax, he doesn’t tell us what exactly happened to the remaining ships.

Instead, he goes on to exhort the reader to pay attention to the signs from God. Once again, it’s worth pointing out that if such an awesome sighting occurred today it wouldn’t be viewed in quite the same light. One can only imagine that an equivalent invasion of modern Germany’s airspace would send more NATO pilots rushing to their planes than parishioners rushing to their pews. But in Glaser’s day, still a few centuries before the dawn of air travel, it was only natural to lean toward supernatural explanations. Interpreting such sightings as visions, dreams, and signs was the only thing

that made sense.

Curiously enough, an almost identical sighting occurred just a few years later over Basel, Switzerland. Just like in Nuremberg, it began early in the morning. Just as the sun was rising over the horizon, multiple witnesses saw large black spheres appear in the sky and engage each other in what could only be termed aerial combat. During the course of this battle, many of the craft became “red and igneous” before being “consumed” (with flame?), falling to the ground, and “dying out”. This incident was reported in Basel’s gazette newspaper at the time, but it ultimately faded into the past with no explanation ever put forward.

Looking at these events with modern eyes, what can we make of them? Why would ancient astronauts choose earth simply as a backdrop for battle? Couldn’t they fight each other just as easily in deep space? Why would they engage in warfare over the skies of Germany and Switzerland during the heyday of the Renaissance?

Elves, Fairies, and Ancient Astronauts of the British Isles

The British Isles are rich with myth and legend. Since ancient times, stories of witches, wizards, and mythical creatures have abounded there. Some of the most popular involve beings known as fairies. Fairies were said to be alien to our world, coming from a faraway enchanted land that was paradoxically just outside of our own reality. They popped across from time to time in order to interact with us—and more often than not, play tricks on an unsuspecting humanity—before sauntering back to their castles in the sky.

In recent times, many have noted stunning similarities between the old British tales of encounters with fairies and the modern alien abduction phenomenon. Ironically, the basic elements of the stories are so similar that the strong coincidences therein have been used to argue both for and against the possibility of alien abduction. Initially, many pointed to tales of fairies spiriting people away in the middle of the night to argue that alien abduction is just a modern continuation of medieval mythmaking, one that puts a new technological spin on some very old wives' tales.

But it wasn't long before those who believe in ET abductions began to argue the other side. They assert that these old fairy tales were actually powerful evidence for the veracity of alien abduction accounts. Pulling a page right out of the ancient astronaut handbook, they argue that the fairy abductions of the past and the alien abductions of today are part of the same ongoing phenomenon. It's just that our ancestors were seeing the events through a more primitive lens of understanding. According to them, the fairies and the aliens are one and the same; they've just been viewed differently at different times in history.

Proponents of this ancient alien theory would point to a case such as the fairy abduction of a girl named Anne Jefferies in 1645. Jefferies was just 19 years old when she began working as a maid for an affluent family in the town of

St. Teach. She had always been interested in fairy stories, and now she actively began to seek out the fairies themselves.

After dark, the fearless girl would walk outside and call to the fairies, singing,

Faerie fair and faerie bright
Come and be my chosen sprite.
Moon shines bright, waters run clear,
I am here, but where's my faerie dear?

Jefferies never did see a fairy on any of those many moonlit nights, but sure enough, on the day that she wasn't looking for them, they finally decided to show up. She was sitting in the garden of the house where she worked, passing the time with some knitting, when she heard the branches of a nearby bush move as if someone was hiding inside. At first she ignored the disturbance, but the more she ignored it, the louder the rustling became. Things then got even stranger when she heard an eerie laugh coming from the bush. Now convinced that someone was indeed snooping around, Jefferies shouted out a challenge to the intruder: "You may stay there until the mildew grows on the gate, before I come to you!"

After issuing this declaration, she heard a loud ringing sound, followed by the same strange laughter she had heard before. Then, suddenly, the source of the laughter emerged as six "little men" came into view. These diminutive entities were garbed from head to toe in green (they were literally 'little green men') and had bright eyes that stood out upon their countenances.

The leader of this group walked toward her, followed by the others. He stopped, bowed to her and began to speak to her kindly. But soon after this innocent-seeming introduction, the creature somehow put Jefferies into a trance. The next thing she knew, she felt the prick of a pin and the sensation of being hurled through the air at a high rate of speed. She then found herself transported to a "fairy castle" in the sky. Here she played several strange fairy games with her hosts before things took a turn for the worst.

Five of the six fairies suddenly surrounded her with an air of great menace. The other one stood in front of her as if to defend her but was knocked down. One of the attackers then put his hands over her eyes and “all went dark”. The next thing Jefferies knew, she was waking up sprawled across the garden with her very worried employers huddled around her. Just what kind of strange mind games were these fairies/ancient astronauts trying to play?

Some places on the planet seem to be a magnet for age-old abduction tales more than others. The enchanted land of Ireland is just such a place, and if you believe the ancestral Irish legend of the Tuatha de Danann, you might conclude that this alien magnetism is baked right into the Irish DNA!

According to the legend, sometime in the remote past beings called the Tuatha descended upon Ireland aboard dark clouds. (As we’ve discussed, when ancient texts refer to clouds in this manner, they often mean cloud-shaped vehicles.) These cloud-ships landed in the mountains, where the ancient astronauts set up a base from which they quickly expanded, overwhelming the existing residents of Ireland to became the rulers of the land. During their campaign of conquest they performed amazing feats that seemed like magic to their opponents, such as appearing and disappearing at will.

These entities are also associated with the construction of impressive Neolithic sites such as Stonehenge and the mysterious “Stone of Destiny” monument, and it is said that they either directed or inspired the religion of Druidism. Not much is known about the Druids, since they kept no written records and their oral tradition has long since died out. But those who encountered them believed that they had a great and terrifying magic at their command. Julius Caesar, for example, recalled that during his invasion of Britain, the Druids seemed to have power over the very weather, causing floods and heavy rains to come down on command.

Did the Druids possess some secret weapon given to them by the Tuatha de Danann? Is this why the Romans were so afraid of them? The Druids were eventually subdued and disbanded, but the strange legacy of the Tuatha de Danann lived on.

As you can see, whether you are dealing with elves, fairies, or ancient astronauts, there is always quite a tale to tell.

Ancient Alien Gods?
A Brief Program Note

In many of the myths, legends, and even scriptures of mainstream religions around the world, there seems to be a pattern that hints at intervention from on high. To be sure, we don't have all of the answers, and to paint every mysterious event from ancient history as a potential encounter with aliens would be a great disservice to the reader. Going overboard and finding traces of ancient astronauts in every single historical unknown would be just as bad as refusing to entertain the possibility of alien contact altogether.

To use an often-quoted aphorism, "It's good to have an open mind—but not so open that your brain falls out!" And it is for that reason—to make sure that we don't lose our minds—that I have tried to give this book a healthy balance of both skepticism and imaginative speculation. Many a good ancient astronaut theorist has gone off the deep end, finding ancient aliens in places that seem vanishingly unlikely. These zealots then embark upon creating a new religion, replacing the old gods of myths and mainstream religion with alien entities.

So before we begin happily hailing some spaceman from Zeta Reticula as our newfound creator, let's take a step back so we can avoid making the same mistake that ancient astronaut theorists claim our ancestors made. Lest we try to turn alien visitors into gods all over again, remember that aliens could never have created us, any more than they could have created themselves. Despite what some would assume, ancient astronaut theory does not necessarily negate a belief in God.

If you believe in God, you can still believe in ancient astronaut theory. In the end, all matter in the universe—human, alien, and everything in between—came from the same source. Scientists now believe that the universe started as an infinitesimally small molecule that exploded into existence some 14 billion years ago in an event called the Big Bang. That molecule contained all of the material that would eventually become stars and planets, and all of the

material that would become biological organisms on far-flung worlds all across the ever-expanding universe.

If you believe that God purposefully kick started that Big Bang, that's fine; and if you believe it simply happened spontaneously, you are entitled to that belief as well. But to repeat the supposed error of the Sumerians et al. and turn aliens into gods capable of achieving such a feat is ridiculous. As Zachariah Sitchin pointed out, beings like the Annunaki may have helped shape man out of the primordial clay, but they did not create the Play-Doh! Anyway, after that brief program note, I will now officially get off my soapbox! Thank you for reading this book!

Further Reading and Reference

Now that you have reached the end of this book, you may want to take some time to explore some of the many resources and references that went into writing it. Feel free to browse through them all.

***Chariots of the Gods? Unsolved Mysteries of the Past*. Erich Von Daniken**
If you read any book at all about ancient astronauts, you've got to read this one! This classic from Erich Von Daniken is the book that broke the whole ancient astronaut theory wide open. Von Daniken is a great writer, and he has crafted a riveting tale with his treatise on ancient astronauts. He truly has a gift for visualizing the complex concepts he writes about, and his opinions are very persuasive.

And that's fortunate, because in the end the book is primarily composed of Von Daniken's opinions and speculations. *Chariots of the Gods* is a very entertaining book, but it reads more like an editorial page than a fact-based study. Today's readers of this 1968 work may also be frustrated by Von Daniken's overly optimistic predictions for the space program. For example, the book assumes that mankind would have a permanent moon base by the 1980s!

Overall, however, this book serves as a wonderful primer for Ancient Astronaut theory.

***The End of Days: Armageddon and Prophecies of the Return*. Zachariah Sitchin**
Zachariah Sitchin stunned the world with his interpretations of ancient Sumerian tablets. In these cuneiform inscriptions, Sitchin claimed to have found a detailed description of an expedition to our planet carried out by ancient astronauts. He called the series of books in which he outlined this hidden history the *Earth Chronicles*, and *The End of Days* is the seventh and last of that series.

The book focuses on both the alleged ET visitors and on prophesies of worldwide calamity preceding their return. This is an intriguing book with a lot of great information on the many myths, legends, and religious books that appear to focus on these themes. There are a lot of great insights, but this is another book that's a little dated now: Sitchin makes a big deal about the year 2012 potentially being the pivotal year for monumental change.

Of course, the so-called Mayan prophecy for 2012 turned out to be a complete bust. This book was written in 2007, when 2012 fever was at its height, and Sitchin himself didn't live to see the prophecy proved wrong—he passed away in 2010. So I guess we'll just have to cut the poor guy some slack, right?

***Genesis Revisited: Is Modern Science Catching Up with Ancient Knowledge?* Zachariah Sitchin**
Sitchin knew the history of the Near East very well, and in this book, he proves it. Sitchin analyzes Genesis and many other ancient Near and Middle Eastern texts to analyze potential references to technological events in light of the knowledge that we have today. With the ancient Sumerian text as a guide, Sitchin questions whether the creation story in Genesis was more complicated than we thought—complicated enough to include DNA manipulation, no less! He also expounds upon the possibility that a nuclear bomb was dropped on the doomed cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. These are just a few of the intriguing instances of possible ancient astronaut influence that Sitchin covers.

***The Wars of Gods and Men*. Zachariah Sitchin**
In this third book of Sitchin's *Earth Chronicles* series, he examines potential relationships between ancient wars and ancient astronauts. Sitchin is very thorough in this book; rather than simply spouting random conjectures, he backs up each of his claims with compelling evidence. This book is a great addition to anyone's ancient astronaut library.

***Divine Encounters: A Guide to Visions, Angels, and other Emissaries*. Zachariah Sitchin**
This book examines the role that ancient astronauts played as messengers and

guides in the distant past. Whether they were referred to as angels, gods, or something else, these entities were viewed as a source of untold knowledge. This book recounts many fascinating tales of man interacting with what he believed to be the divine—and what may actually have been ancient astronauts.

***Ancient Astronauts, Cosmic Collisions and other Popular Theories About Man's Past*. William Stiebling**

William Stiebling truly runs the gamut in this fascinating book, taking us down the rabbit hole when it comes to ancient astronaut theory. Here you will find just about every idea and theory there is when it comes to the possibility of ancient astronauts interacting with our planet. Although much of this needs to be taken with a grain of salt, the possibilities are still worth entertaining nonetheless. If you are a serious ancient astronaut theorist, you need to get this book!

***The Ancient Alien Question: A New Inquiry into the Existence, Evidence, and Influence of Ancient Visitors*. Philip Coppens**

Just as the rather long title might suggest, this book attempts to make a fresh examination of ancient astronaut theory. It does so by examining the work of the greats who came before, including Erich Von Daniken and Carl Sagan. At one point the author takes on Sagan's claim that Von Daniken basically ripped off the whole ancient astronaut theory from him.

Sagan, remember, made the paradoxical claim that he was the one who inspired the interest in ancient astronauts—even though he personally didn't believe in them! Sagan's stand when it came to ancient astronauts was kind of like a chef baking a cake, insisting he got credit for it, but then telling people, "Yeah I baked it! But it tastes like crap!" And in fact Sagan's complex opinion on ancient astronauts seems to have been baked in from the very beginning.

As Philip Coppens's book relates, Sagan was often critical of ancient astronaut theorists for not being objective enough and for failing to express the "speculative" nature of their research. He seemed to have particular animus in this regard for Von Daniken's *Chariots of the Gods*. As Coppens

tells us, William Stiebling humorously refuted this position by asking, "[Speculative?] It seems Sagan did not see the more than 230 question marks in Von Daniken's book!" Stiebling makes a good point, but at the same time he himself risks coming off as too much of a cheerleader for the theories of Erich Von Daniken.

At any rate, Coppens provides some much-needed insight on the making of one of the most earth-shattering theories ever conceived. This book does indeed add much to the previous ancient astronaut speculation, with the help of modern innovations in archeology—and, yes, scientific fact. Philip Coppens asks an incredible question and gets some rather incredible answers.

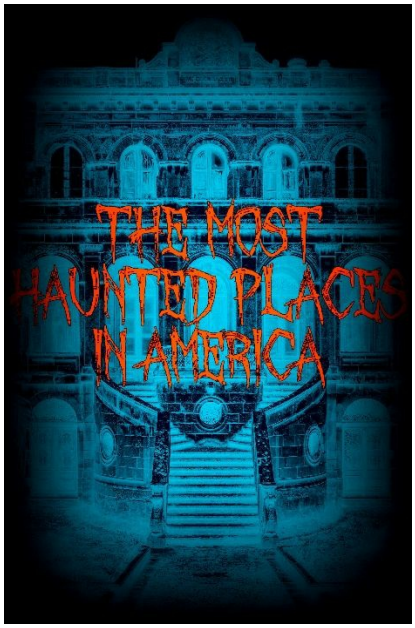
***Passport to Magonia: On UFOs, Folklore, And Parallel Worlds*. Jacques Vallee**

In this book, renowned UFO researcher Jacques Vallee examines potential links between the fairy tales of the past and the accounts of alien intervention in the present. The similarities between fairy encounters and alien encounters have long been noted by both believers and skeptics alike. Skeptics claim that these similarities show that aliens, like fairies, are mere myths, just transferred to a more modern context. For them, the whole UFO phenomenon is nothing more than a modern-day myth—just like fairy lore was before.

But not so fast, skeptics. For those who believe in ancient astronauts, rather than casting doubt on the modern-day UFO/alien phenomenon, the similarity simply proves that alien intervention has been going on for a lot longer than anyone ever expected. As *Passport to Magonia* tells us, perhaps the fairy beings of yesteryear and the aliens of today are one and the same.

Your FREE Gift!

Thank you again for buying and reading my book. Don’t forget to get **your FREE gift**, The Most Haunted Places in America. **Click here to get it.**



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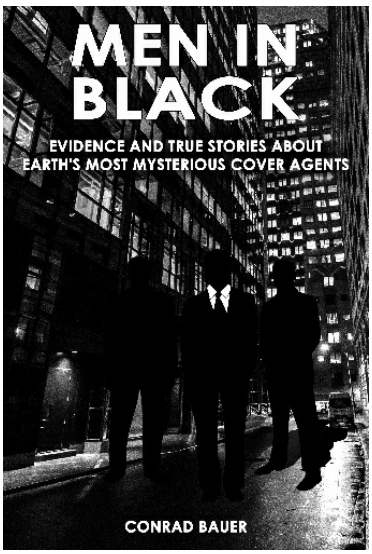

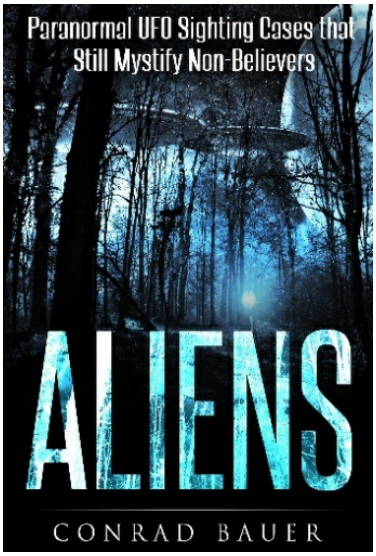

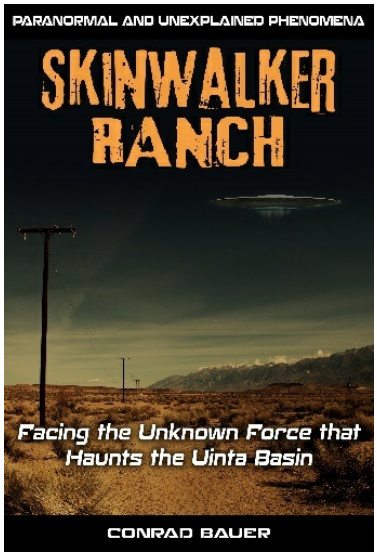
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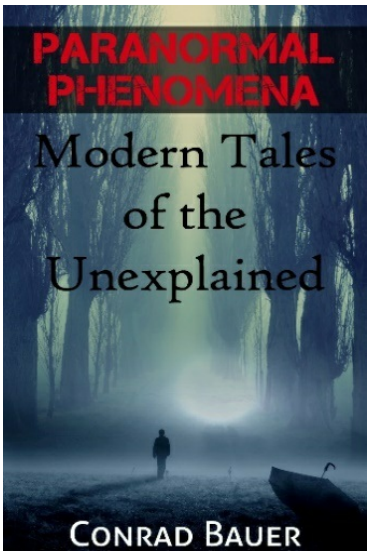
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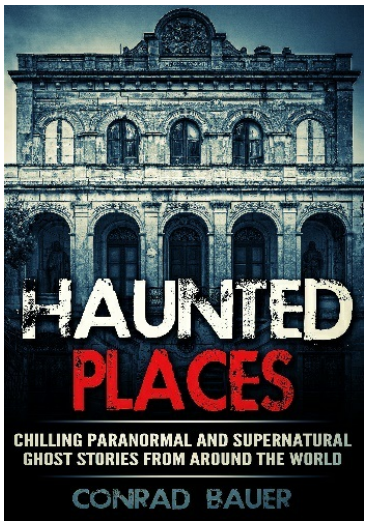
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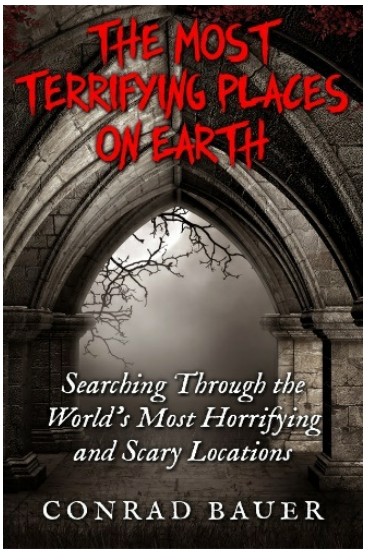
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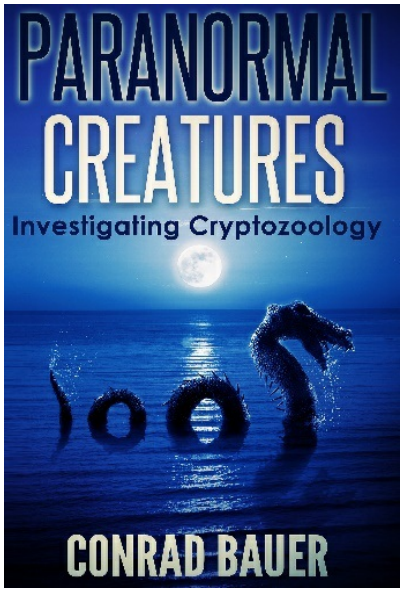

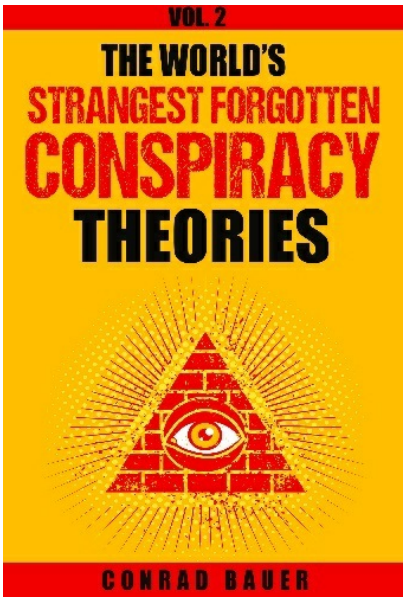

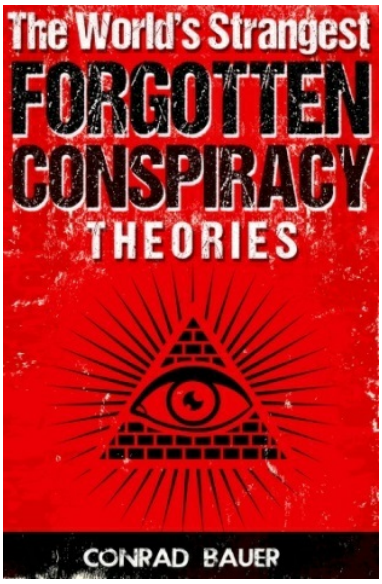

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